DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 314 182 PS 018 502

AUTHOR Leavitt, Midge, Ed.
TITLE Teaching All the Children: Stories from the Classroom.
INSTITUTION New Brunswick Dept. of Education, Fredericton (Canada).
PUB DATE Dec 89
NOTE 48p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Techniques; Cooperative Learning; Disabilities; *Elementary School Curriculum; *Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *Learning Strategies; *Mainstreaming; *Secondary School Curriculum; Student Needs; Teacher Student Relationship

ABSTRACT

This book presents personal narratives from New Brunswick teachers concerning their experiences in trying to meet the academic and social needs of children in multi-level classes. Topics include the first year of teaching, the process of adapting for students who have special needs, cooperative learning in the class, integration experiences, integration at upper Miramichi Elementary School, realistic integration, child-centered teaching, strategies for inclusion, ways to meet individual needs, and the passion for learning. (RJC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED314182

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

TEACHING ALL THE CHILDREN

Stories from the Classroom

Department of Education

Fredericton, N.B.

1989

PS 018502

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Midge Leaviff

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Published by:
Department of Education
Province of New Brunswick
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, N.B.
E3B 5H1
Canada

December 1989

Typesetting:
Queen's Printer for New Brunswick

Printing and Binding:
Printing Services, Supply and Services

A BOOK BY TEACHERS, FOR TEACHERS

This is a homegrown book: New Brunswick expertise. It was put together on the advice of all those teachers who have been telling us that the most useful, significant and confidence-building inservice experience is hearing stories from other teachers, stories about day-to-day life in the classroom.

The authors of *Teaching All the Children* share their answers to the perennial challenge of teaching in a multi-level classroom: how to meet the academic and social needs of all students — without wearing out the teacher.

At first, when I asked them for their stories, many of the authors weren't sure what to write; their attitudes, insights and strategies have become so natural to them that they seemed too obvious to write about. But these "obvious," often subtle, things are important; they are the fruit of sensitive teaching, child watching, reflecting.

It isn't easy. How do *you* create an atmosphere of acceptance and sharing in *your* classroom? How do you help children learn to work both collaboratively and independently? How do you combine all those different talents, interests, energies? Perhaps you yourself have a story to share. If so, please send it along. We hope to publish a second volume in the future.

Midge Leavitt, Editor

CONTENTS

PAGE

"Sometimes" Is Progress, Joe Kenny 7

Aidan and His Friends, Eleanor McLaughlin 10

Integration in District #40, Helen Warren 14

My First Year of Teaching, Kim Bowes 15

My Experience with Integration, Bronwyn Bagnell 17

Don't Close the File, Michael A. Barrett 22

Adapting for Students Who Have Special Needs, Dawn Linton 24

Co-operative Learning in the Classroom, Dawn Savoie 28

Integration Experiences, Judy MacManus 31

Integration at Upper Miramichi Elementary School, Barbara Gilks and Pauline Merrill 33

Child-Centred Teaching, Joanne E. Hughson 35

Strategies for Inclusion, Larry Rhindress 39

Teaching All the Children, Mary T. O'Keefe 41

Meeting Individual Needs, Pauline Springer 43

Realistic Integration, David Blair 45

A Passion for Learning, Linda Hickey 48

"SOMETIMES" IS PROGRESS

Aidan is a special needs student. He was a normal active boy until he was five, at which time he was struck by a car. As a result, he has been crippled in both legs, his left arm has been left useless, his speech is severely impaired and he has learning disabilities. With all this Aidan has been a valued member of my class with needs we must deal with.

To start with, the first lesson I teach all students who enter my class, whether or not they are classified as special needs, is consideration. This is taught in the form of a lesson and by the example I set for my class. It is a skill practised and stressed in my class the year through with the hope of it carrying on for life.

From here I worked with Aidan as I would any other student. I was aware of his academic needs, so I knew how to deal with them. Aidan is a very sociable person, so that created no problem. His physical needs were something we had to address and we did it as a project involving the students, resource teacher, Aidan, the teacher aide, the physiotherapist and the speech therapist.

The next thing was to pull all this together on a daily basis and make it all work for Aidan. I would like to take you through an average day.

At 8:45 the bell rings and students line up to go to class. Aidan is wheeled inside the school door by a student. The student goes back to line up with his class and Aidan makes his way to the classroom, wheeling with his one good arm. He usually races the rest of the students to the classroom.

The Aide gets Aidan's jacket, hat, boots, etc., off and put away. She then gets Aidan standing, leaning on a table for support so that he can sing the "O Canada," say the Lord's Prayer and recite the Salutation of The Flag with his classmates. Aidan cannot follow along perfectly with the class on these opening exercises but he tries and has progressed well over the year.

Attendance is called and Aidan is responsible for responding just as the other students are, even though he will respond a little slower. We wait for him.

Next comes Journal Writing. The class write their feelings, ideas, thoughts and experiences silently. At this time, Aidan recites to either the Aide or to me, his feelings, ideas, thoughts and experiences and we write down what he tells us. If we cannot understand him or he gets lazy and leaves out words in a sentence, we ask him to repeat the sentence.

Sometimes he leaves the word out because it is difficult for him to say the word but he has learned quickly it is better to put it in the first time than to have to put it in the second or third time along with repeating the rest of the sentence. This was suggested by the speech therapist.

Through the journal writing Aidan has revealed many good and emotional thoughts, ideas and feelings.

When the dictation ends, a piece of paper with lines about an inch apart is taped to his table and he is expected to get his journal writing copied in his own printing. While he is printing, students are aware of his posture, as they are at all times of the day, and if he is slouched in his chair someone will tap his spine. This is a signal to him to get himself straightened up. This was suggested by the physiotherapist.

When journal time is over Aidan goes to the resource room for a half hour of Math. The resource teacher works with him on his skills and sends practice sheets back to the classroom to work on in any spare time.

While Aidan is out, the rest of the class works on Language Arts skills. I always try to get board and stencilled exercises completed while he is out. I plan on the oral reading of the story or answering questions orally or discussing for when he comes back so that he can participate.

When Aidan wants to answer a question or give a comment he has it a little more difficult than the rest of the class because I insist he use his good right hand to raise his useless left hand. This was suggested by the physiotherapist.

Next comes recess and, if possible, Aidan goes with the rest of the class. One of the students helps get his coat, hat and boots on.

The first class after recess is Math. When I teach a lesson or review a lesson Aidan is required to pay attention. I try to have him understand all the skills and be able to work with them but I am also realistic enough to know he can't. Many concepts he misses. Many concepts he does pick up. If he is having any success with the concepts, he works on them. If not, he goes back to the math sheets the resource teacher has given him or finishes copying his journal entry or completes Language Arts sheets from last day.

Noon hour is next on the timetable. Aidan generally eats his lunch at school with the rest of his classmates. If he is getting something from the canteen I always ask how much money he has, what he is buying, how much it will cost and how much he will have left. At first he never knew the answer to the money questions but, because I persisted in asking him, near the end of the year he could sometimes answer. Sometimes is progress.

After lunch I read to the students from a novel for approximately 15 minutes. I often ask what happened last day or how did it end or what do you think will happen next or what did such and such a character do. Aidan very often raises his hands and often I ask him. He always comes back with a good answer.

Aidan then goes for half an hour to the resource room for Language Arts. He returns with some work to do. Aidan and I set that work aside to do in a time when the other students are copying board notes or writing answers to questions or doing something Aidan cannot do.

Science, Social Studies or Health usually comes next with very good participation and a good deal of general knowledge on Aidan's part. The actual texts have been adapted to his level by the resource teachers so he can follow along and also have meaningful activities for him to work at while the other students work at their activities.

Phys. Ed. comes next. As a warm-up we have all the students do some exercises along with Aidan that were suggested by the physiotherapist for Aidan. The other students have to make parts of their bodies resist the exercises so they can see what it is like for Aidan.

Well, the long day has ended and off goes Aidan on the bus. Many days when he is gone I wonder did we do enough today to help meet Aidan's needs. But then again I wonder if we did enough to meet the needs of Kevin and Lloyd and Sarah who are not children with special needs but nonetheless have needs special to them.

Joe Kenny

AIDAN AND HIS FRIENDS: ENRICHING EACH OTHER'S LIVES

This article was originally published in EDUCATION NEW BRUNSWICK, April, 1989. It is reprinted here with permission of the author.

Aidan is a typical 11-year old. Perhaps he is best described in his own words, which he wrote to his pen pal in North Carolina ... "I live in Chatham, New Brunswick. I am in grade 5 in school. I am an artist. My favourite classes in school are art and language arts." Aidan is a boy scout, he likes lunch at McDonald's, and he does not like homework on weekends. His favourite T.V. personality is Vanna White. He's just a regular kid.

As with each of us, Aidan has his differences. His letter goes on to say "I am in a wheelchair." When he was five years old, Aidan was injured in a car accident. This caused extensive damage to his left side and impaired his capacity for speech. Aidan's ability to understand speech, as well as to comprehend his environment, is totally intact, however.

Aidan has never been in a segregated class. This year, he is a member of Joe Kenny's class at St. Andrews School in Chatham. His schedule includes regular classes throughout the day, two half-hour resource periods and speech therapy each week. As well, he travels to a local hospital every two weeks for physiotherapy sessions.

Earlier in the year, Aidan's classmates began to ask questions about what this therapy involved, since Aidan left his class for an entire morning to attend these sessions. When kids ask questions, it provides an opportunity for teaching — in this case, a challenging project which could be resource room based, and would include Aidan.

After collaborating with Aidan's teacher, we decided to choose two classmates who could attend therapy with Aidan. Their job would be to research the session and later share their acquired knowledge with their classmates. The students selected had to be motivated so that time spent outside of class would not interfere with their regular progress.

David, Aidan and Natalie
friends, classmates and study partners

Before the day arrived when they would go with Aidan, his friends, Natalie and David, came to the resource room with him to plan their project. We decided that the objectives of their project would be as follows:

(1) *Observation* - to observe Aidan's therapy exercises, identify and describe them.
(2) *Interview* - to ask the therapists questions about their work with Aidan, as well as the career itself.
(3) *Photography* - to take pictures of each exercise.
(4) *Video* - to film the session.
(5) *Computer Printout* - to type some of the information on the computer to share later with classmates.

Soon the big day arrived and Aidan, Natalie and David were off to the hospital on the bus, along with teacher aide Dawn MacDonald and Aidan's mom. The children worked hard to meet the objectives previously decided upon. The students took notes and pictures, while Dawn videoed.

During the time following their visit, Natalie, David and Aidan spent several hours in the resource room compiling information, making posters and practising their oratorical skills.

On the day of the presentation the three students did a great job. Although Aidan's speech is slow and laboured, his classmates understood his lines very well. They listened intently as each exercise was described, then viewed the video with great interest. One of the questions asked of Aidan during the discussion afterwards was "Why do you work so hard at therapy when some of the exercises actually seem to hurt?" It was then that Aidan's classmates learned that he has a dream — that someday he might walk again. If therapy brings him any closer to that goal, then it's all worthwhile.

The group then decided on several ways in which they could help Aidan at school: (1) They would encourage him to stand for "O Canada" each day — after all, he stood up at therapy! (2) The student who sits behind Aidan would tap his back to remind him to sit straight, as the therapist did on the video. (3) When asking questions in class, Aidan would clasp his left hand in his right and raise both hands together. This motion would recreate the stretching exercise done at therapy. (4) His classmates would take turns exercising with him and Dawn during phys. ed. periods.

Aidan and his classmates shared a great deal that day. In the follow-up creative writing assignment, many of his classmates expressed the way they view him, and that is in terms of his strengths. As one classmate wrote, "Aidan is one of the most gifted kids I know."

The Best Of Luck In The Future Aidan

Down at the library Aidan seemed the calmest of the three of them at first. And when we were watching the film he looked very interested at watching himself.

Those exercises are really neat to me, but he puts a lot of hard work into them. Of course, it seems like he has a lot of willpower and doesn't really mind doing them. But when he said that his biggest dreams are to be able to walk and drive a car, I felt like jumping up and saying "I'm with you all the way Aidan." Because I want to help him. Is there any way I can help Aidan?

Barbara McFarlane

Aidan

Yesterday we went to the library to watch David and Natalie's project on Aidan. Aidan was seriously injured in a car accident in 1982, now Aidan is in a wheelchair. I felt very happy that someone did a project with Aidan and got to go to his therapy. I just hope that someday Aidan will be able to walk and move his left arm. I think David and Natalie did a very nice job and they were the right ones to pick. The exercises that Aidan did must have been very tiring for him especially the kneel standing.

Brian Moar

This project is an example of a way to create a teaching opportunity out of that part of a student's life which is different from his peers'. This type of activity allows a resource room to function in terms of an open model. A resource centre can and should be a place where a variety of students are welcomed — not only those students requiring support services, but also those who could benefit from challenging activities.

This type of interaction is testimony to the fact that students with disabilities and their friends learn from one another and enrich each other's lives. An integrated education system provides an environment where these interactions can occur. In turn, meaningful relationships are fostered.

As for our three students, they're doing just fine! Natalie and David had a learning experience. They learned to take responsibility, to research and organize information, and to work co-operatively. Their fear of public speaking has somewhat subsided! Aidan had a chance to share his greatest strengths, which are his determination, hopefulness and capacity for positive thinking. With qualities like these, and friends like Natalie and David, Aidan certainly has a promising future!

Eleanor McLaughlin
Resource Teacher

INTEGRATION IN DISTRICT #40

Integration went extremely well at Rexton Elementary and Junior High during the year 1988-89. We had a school population of 397 students from grades 1 to 7 in seventeen classrooms, with fourteen special needs students (former auxiliary class) totally integrated in age-appropriate classes.

The success of integrating our students was due to several factors. Our school board holds the belief that all students can learn and that they learn best with their peers. Mr. Roe, our Superintendent, was most supportive. We were given release time for our teachers to have in-service both locally and provincially on many occasions. Our shared supervisor, Mrs. Joan Wall, was extremely helpful. She was at Rexton Elementary and Junior High each week on a consultant basis. Joan led our local in-service on integration and was instrumental in establishing our M.A.P.S. sessions, gradually training our Resource and Methods teacher as well as some classroom teachers in the techniques of developing I.E.P.'s and conducting a M.A.P.S. session. The attitude of all staff members was super. A big factor was that we didn't have an overload of Resource and Methods teachers but involved the whole staff.

The co-operation of the parents was excellent. It's so very important that teachers, parents, social workers and others all be involved and comprise a team working toward the best education possible for our special students. Our local Department of Health and Community Services were most supportive. They provided funding for support services whenever necessary, e.g., when they had foster children with special needs transfer in throughout the year and our resources were already stretched to the limit.

Such co-operation makes for pleasant relationships between the different departments of government.

Last but not least, our support staff was of extremely high calibre. Our aides and attendants went beyond the call of duty to make our programs work. The relationships between the classroom teachers and the paraprofessionals just couldn't have been better and as a result we provided excellent programs for all our students.

The staff at Rexton Elementary and Junior High have high expectations for our integrated students. We know they will succeed.

Helen M. Warren
Principal

MY FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

I have just completed my first year of teaching at Rexton Elementary and Junior High School. I graduated from Mount Allison University with my Bachelor of Education in 1988.

Before coming to teach at Rexton Elementary I was aware of the positive feelings and views about integration held by the administration. After meeting other teachers I became aware of their caring and accepting views also. This acceptance of special needs children is contagious and enhances community involvement within our school; we have an abundance of help from volunteers. This is the foundation on which positive attitudes towards integrated children is built.

During the school year I received a new student. I will call her Jane. Jane came to Rexton because she had been taken out of her home and placed in a foster home in the area. She had originally been placed in another class in the school with her sister, but the two were causing quite a problem. The degree of the problem was such that neither girl was benefitting from her placement in the classroom. So, a decision was made to separate the girls. Jane came to my class and her sister to another.

Jane did not have the academic ability to complete grade 6 work. So, in order to create an environment in which she had a better chance to succeed, I had to modify my regular class work.

With the help of an aide two periods a day I hoped to complete the objectives of each lesson with the entire class. Often, I made two different lesson plans, one for Jane and one for the rest of the class, sharing the same objectives but differing in the methods by which the objectives were met.

Other modifications included the acceptance of one- or two-word responses instead of complete sentences, and partial completion of exercises. I didn't worry about Jane not completing all of the work. I was concerned that she not be threatened by the work, thus defeated before even attempting it. For example, a whole page of math questions would result in Jane putting her head down and saying that she could not do it. A page with five or six of the same questions would be attempted without a fuss.

Modifications were also made at test time. Jane would be tested on the same material and at the same time as the rest of the class. Her test questions would be worded differently and partial answers would be given for her to complete. If she ran out of time, her buddy or I would accept oral responses.

Jane needed a lot of encouragement and praise. She gave up very easily when confronted with a problem, and it was at these times that she needed gentle guidance and encouragement. To be completely honest, there were times when I lost my patience and became frustrated with Jane. I did not want her to feel my frustration, so I would tell her that someone else needed me for moment. I would leave her for a moment to check on someone else and when I returned to her I felt refreshed and ready to give the problem another try.

Jane, more than anyone else in the class, needed to know that I liked her and cared about her. She needed constant reassurance of my feelings. It was easy to reassure her and to help her feel secure: a lot of praise and understanding, a special private talk every now and again, and an occasional hug were usually sufficient.

I try to promote a very caring and non-threatening atmosphere in the classroom, where students are encouraged to help and praise one another. This, I believe, enhanced the acceptance of Jane by her classmates. Jane received a lot of help from her classmates, particularly during group activities. Classmates encouraged Jane to participate and shared their information with her. This really helped Jane to feel a part of the class.

Jane deserved praise for her accomplishments. Her strengths were exploited and her weaknesses worked on at a level that ensured her success. Jane was given awards for particular achievements along with her classmates. She rehearsed lines in a class play and acted her part as well as her classmates did. She was as remarkable as any other student and by the end of the school year I think she began to realize this. As a result of Jane's achievements her self image improved, which enhanced her confidence and the development of skills in all areas.

It truly was a pleasure to have Jane in the class. Over the year we became very good friends. I always thought that it was only the students who thought it was special to have a teacher as a friend but now, seeing it from the teacher's perspective for the first time, I realize that teachers also hold these friendships as being very special.

Kim Bowes

AN ACCOUNT OF MY EXPERIENCES WITH INTEGRATION AT REXTON ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR HIGH

As a teacher, I can honestly say that my experiences with integration at Rexton Elementary School have been rewarding and have certainly honed my skills as an educator of all children. The following is a summary of my experience.

When I was first approached about the idea of having Dennis, a twelve-year-old mentally handicapped boy, integrated into my Grade 5 class, I was somewhat apprehensive, yet excited at the challenge.

Before Dennis arrived, Joan Wall, an integration consultant, spoke to my students about how Dennis might feel initially in our class — how he would need a "circle of friends" to support and encourage him and simply to be his friends.

From the beginning Dennis was thrilled to be part of our class. He wanted to be involved in all class activities and felt very proud to be a Grade 5 student. This was evident when, a few days after his arrival, the class went on a field trip and Dennis took every Grade 5 textbook with him in his bookbag. A group of boys immediately came to his rescue as we had a lot of walking to do and these boys became his closest "buddies."

I was pleased to have Dennis in my classroom and accepted him as any other child. Before long the other students displayed the same attitude and it wasn't long before they began simply to see Dennis as a fellow classmate rather than as someone "special."

At first it was somewhat of a challenge to adapt the regular Grade 5 curriculum to suit Dennis's needs. I never made a special lesson plan for Dennis; instead, I adapted the regular lessons. For example, during oral discussions Dennis actively participated. He was expected to follow the same rules as the other students — to raise his hand, not to interrupt, etc. When asking questions I would ask him simple questions that I felt sure he could respond to successfully.

We worked in groups often. In these groups, no matter what, there was always something Dennis could do successfully, whether it was describing pictures, repeating words or role playing. It didn't take long for the other students to become adept at creating ways Dennis could actively participate in their group. Their ideas and suggestions often far surpassed my own.

When the class was writing, Dennis would be too. Each day he wrote in a journal, reviewing day, date and any news he might want to include. If the students were writing stories, he would as well, although he would dictate them to me or to another student and then copy them over. It's surprising how little time this takes. Thus, he would be doing the same activity as the other students, only the learning objectives differed.

During silent reading Dennis would listen to a story on tape, usually with another student, or someone would read aloud to him. It was expected that all students, including Dennis, would follow the general classroom rules; if not, all students faced the same consequences.

Prior to Dennis's arrival in the Grade 5 class, he was in an auxilary class. At that time, it was not unusual for him to have temper tantrums and to make regular use of foul language. These behaviour problems disappeared when he entered Grade 5. He was proud to be in a "regular" classroom and pleased to be accepted by his peers. This did wonders for his self-esteem and alleviated the frustrations he had felt in a segregated classroom. As well, his speech began to improve. It was clearer and was more easily understood because of his interaction with his classmates.

In the classroom Dennis presented few problems, but this was not always the case on the playground. In his anxiousness to make friends, he often used inappropriate behaviour to gain attention and could easily be taunted or teased by those other than his classmates who did not know him well. However, he faced the same consequences for breaking playground rules as the other school children did. Eventually he will learn what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour on the playground.

This past year, I have had Danny, a twelve-year-old boy with Down's Syndrome, join my Grade 5/6 class. I was somewhat apprehensive about having Danny because he doesn't speak. I knew this would be a real challenge — to integrate a nonverbal student.

When Danny joined our class he was an extremely shy, withdrawn boy. He would stand at the door and wait until you asked him to come in. He took very little initiative. For the first few days I coaxed him along but one day, when he was out of the classroom, I spoke to the other 21 students and said that I thought there was one person who didn't yet feel a part of our class. I asked them who it was and of course right away they said "Danny." I then asked for suggestions as to how we could make him feel more a part of our class. The children realized that they had been neglecting Danny and only needed a little guidance to change this. Afterwards they were great at accepting him as a fellow classmate.

Once again the need to adapt the regular curriculum was something of a challenge, particularly as Danny was nonverbal. However, one of our main goals

was to increase his verbal ability so we, as a class, tried to encourage Danny to verbalize as much as possible. Often what he said was not understandable, but if he made an attempt we were satisfied. This was an area where the other students were of great help as they would have Danny repeat words if he wanted something. For example, if he wanted a pencil, they would make sure he said "pencil" before giving him one.

As with Dennis, Danny had a particular group of buddies who were terrific in their support of him. They always looked out for him and made sure that he made it to his other classes — gym, music and resource — and also included him in playground activities.

In group work, once again the children always came up with ways of including Danny in their group and often asked for him to be a part of their group even before I had assigned anything.

Danny had a similar diary to that of Dennis although he traced over previously dotted lines and then tried to repeat the words from the diary.

For oral discussions he would be expected to sit and to listen as the others did. Instead of asking him questions about the lesson, I would perhaps show him a picture of something dealing with the lesson and ask him to tell me what it was. As well, Danny listened to stories on tape, usually with a group of students.

When we did drama, which was quite often, (acting out stories, dramatizing vocabulary words, etc.) Danny was always involved. At first he was very hesitant about going to the front of the class and literally had to be led up. However, within a short time he was going up in front of the others full of confidence, with a smile on his face.

For our math period, Ginny, our teacher's aide, was always available and was a wonderful help. At times, if we were working with manipulatives, Danny stayed with the rest of the class. Also, whenever the students did board work I would put a barely visible question on the board for Danny and he would trace over it. Later we would check his questions with the others.

It's quite amazing how quickly one can become adept at discovering ways in which to integrate a special needs student. Often it comes at the "spur of the moment" when you are teaching a lesson and you think, "aha, this is something Danny can do" — and away you go. And again, the other students are wonderful in their ways of including a special needs student into their activities. They themselves feel a sense of pride and satisfaction when Danny has achieved something.

One of the concerns that I have heard expressed about integration is that having a special needs child in the class holds the other students back. I have not found

this to be true in my experience. In fact, I think the opposite is true. I think having a special needs child in the class helps other children to grow. They learn patience; they learn that everybody has strengths and weaknesses and different needs; they develop a caring attitude and creativity in their ways of including them in their class. Are these not important lessons to teach children? Are they not the lessons that will help them most in their adult life?

Two particular experiences come to mind when I think of how children's attitudes have changed by having a special needs child in their class. When Dennis first entered our class, not all the other children accepted him readily. Susan wouldn't talk to him or sit beside him — basically wouldn't have anything to do with him. One day while we were preparing to watch a film, Dennis sat down beside Susan and she immediately got up and moved. I noticed this and asked her to go back and sit down. Well, within a month that young girl was asking Dennis if he'd like her to read to him or help him with his writing. She was learning to see him as a person more like herself than unlike.

Another experience I had was with a boy who arrived in my class shortly before Christmas. He had had some difficulties in his previous school and was considered a "behaviour problem." He settled into our class fairly well and, despite a few minor problems, adjusted well. He immediately took an interest in Danny and would often help him or express concern about him. There was, however, a period of a couple of weeks when Bob had a hard time getting along with his classmates. Whether something was upsetting him at home, I don't know, but he was once suspended from school for a week. After that, he once again settled into our class and renewed his friendship with Danny.

One beautiful spring day while all the school children were enjoying their noon hour, many involved in a baseball game, I spotted Bob and Danny over in a corner. There was Bob throwing the ball for Danny so Danny could hit it with the bat. It was a moment I won't forget. Here was this supposedly rough, tough character taking the time away from his friends and a big ball game to teach Danny how to hit with a bat. His caring, patient attitude which he scarcely would show to others was shining through for Danny.

It's not always easy having a special needs child in your class and there are times when I'd think it would be easier if I didn't have to deal with this child. But I think that we as teachers say that about every child at one time or another throughout the school year. All children have "special needs" of one kind or another; they may need help in math, practice in oral reading, or more challenging activities. I think teachers have been teaching special needs students for years. When I hear teachers speak of some of the students they've had over the past twenty years, I say to myself, "And they're worried about integration — they've been integrating all along." I don't think it takes special qualities to be the teacher of a special needs child. It takes patience, creativity and a sense of humour. These are qualities needed to teach any child.

My experiences with integration have been successful and this is due in a large part to the administration in our school and district. Both our principal, Mrs. Warren, and our superintendent, Mr. Roe, have been extremely supportive. Never was there a time that I felt I couldn't call on them for support.

My experiences have convinced me thoroughly that the integration of special needs students into the mainstream is the best way to educate all students. Had Danny or Dennis remained in special education classes, they would not have developed as they have. They may never accomplish much beyond early grades academically, but they have grown in self-confidence and in their social skills. They have been accepted as equals by their peers and surely they ask no more than that.

Bronwyn Bagnell

DON'T CLOSE THE FILE

Kevin is a student whom many of us as teachers see on a regular basis in our classrooms. I would like to share my experience with the hope that we don't close the file on these children who do need us.

Kevin is a grade 8 student, 15 years of age, who has had a number of individual educational plans developed during his elementary schooling. This is Kevin's first year at the "High School" (grades 8-12). When he first came to our school in August, 1988, an I.E.P. was developed by the Methods and Resource teacher, in conjunction with Kevin's grade 8 subject teachers. When Kevin came to my Industrial classroom and tried to fill out a student information sheet, I knew then that my methods of teaching would have to change. I recall that later the same day I read Kevin's file to find I had a grade 8 student who had had little success while in our school system. He was working at an academic level of a person in grade 3 or 4 and had a short attention span. Needless to say, he had little success while in his first term of a "watered down" Industrial module.

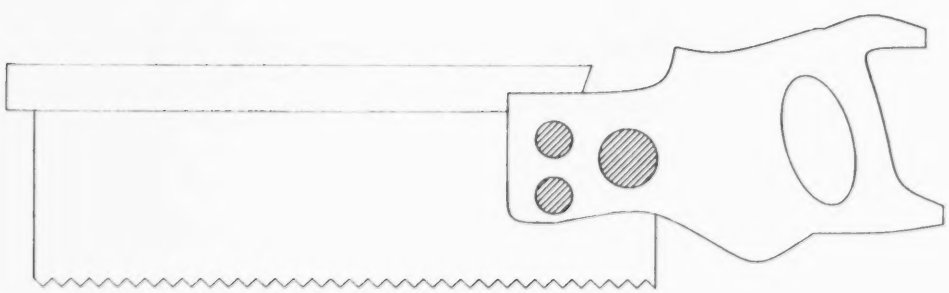
A few days after Kevin's second module in Science began, I was approached by the administration and the Methods and Resource teacher to have Kevin back for the second time in my class. I agreed, but I had no idea what I would be able to teach him the second time around when he could barely grasp any of the concepts that were taught to him in the first module. Nevertheless, on the first Monday Kevin came again, I took him back to the C.A.D. unit (Computer Aided Drafting) and showed him what the computer was capable of doing. He was very interested and began asking a number of questions, which was unusual for him. I then explained the computer menus and he took over. The moment he sat in the chair and began typing, it was unbelievable. It was something you would see on a T.V. special. Here is a boy who literally does not know what 4 multiplied by 3 equals (and if you told him and asked him again a few minutes later, he would have forgotten), yet he can operate something that is totally foreign and new. He can remember how to start and operate the computer by himself every day, so the retention skills that his file said were non-existent are actually there, it just took this machine to make them "click" and to make him interested in retaining knowledge. His reading has improved from reading the menus, and his social well-being is 100% better.

Kevin went on to his third and fourth modules and achieved a certain amount of success in these areas. Success is something he has had little of in his past school career, so he was very pleased with his own performance in the 1988-89 school year.

Before I finish my story, I would like to add a short note, because as I write this in October, 1989, I am presently teaching Kevin in Grade 9 and I wish to inform you that all material he learned using the C.A.D. unit in the previous year was retained through the summer vacation and he has excelled with more difficult aspects of using this machine.

Michael A. Barrett

TOBIQUE VALLEY
HIGH SCHOOL
WOODWORKING CO.



OWNED & OPERATED
BY GR. 8 STUDENTS

An example of Kevin's work

ADAPTING FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS

Adapting for the physical and academic needs of students at first glance appears to be complicated and confusing. However, it involves a great deal of common sense and a degree of resourcefulness in making use of everyday items in ways for which they have not been specifically designed.

This article will give examples of adaptations that were made for two students.

The first student is a girl in grade six who has cerebral palsy. The past year is the first time during her six years in school that adaptations have been necessary. An attendant helps her to manage physically.

The student walks with crutches and from time to time wears a leg brace. She also has a wheelchair which is used only for travelling distances and for transportation between the bus and school when the weather makes walking hazardous. Because of her difficulty walking, the student leaves class five minutes early in order to get to the next class on time.

One adaptation that had to be made was in the area of fine motor skills, particularly in writing notes. The volume of notes has increased and her co-ordination has deteriorated somewhat because of the cerebral palsy. She must make an attempt at writing the notes from the board, the goal being to copy approximately half of the notes in order to maintain her fine motor skills.

For study purposes, the notes are photocopied from either the teacher's copy or from the notes of a student who takes complete and neat notes. The method depends on how each individual teacher wants to do it. Notes can also be made by a fellow student using carbon paper while copying his or her own notes.

When the teacher marks notebooks, this student must pass in both her written and photocopied notes — one provides a mark for neatness and the other for completeness.

The student uses a rubber mat to hold her book stable on her desk while she writes and is permitted to use a pencil instead of a pen for neatness. However, she prefers to use a pen the same as everyone else although the neatness sometimes suffers.

It was found that the student had come to rely heavily on the attendant to fetch things from her locker if she forgot them and to get her crutches so she could get

around the room. She usually left her crutches against the wall of the classroom or she would lay them beside her desk and obstruct the aisle. She would not move until the attendant came for her. This necessitated the attendant being constantly available for extremely minor things that the student could have done for herself. In order to make her independent, we devised a strap (actually it is an elastic strap used to hold hockey shin pads in place) to fasten her crutches upright against the desk.

To cut down on the amount of run and fetch, we organized her locker so that all books stand on end and are grouped according to classes (cardboard holders for magazines or detergent boxes cut diagonally are ideal for this).

She takes a backpack with her materials for the morning and at noon she exchanges them for the afternoon's materials.

Because her physical limitations cause her to work more slowly than the rest of the students, she is expected to finish fewer questions. If the exercise is to be recopied with blanks to be filled in, she is allowed to fill in the blanks without recopying the whole exercise.

She liked the attention she had gotten previously and had come to rely on the support of the attendant, so we have experienced less than complete co-operation at times. She mislays the strap and the mat when she doesn't want to co-operate and she has to be reminded frequently to keep her books in order. This was to be expected as change invariably comes slowly.

The second student, who is in grade seven, has required a great deal of adaptation academically. He has spina bifida, is in a wheelchair, and has lost most of his sight during the past four years. He has been learning to read and type Braille. When tested using educational diagnostic tools he functions at a grade four level in reading and math. However, when led step by step through the grade seven math questions and reading exercises, he can function as well as many of the grade seven students — actually better than some. He has an aide to work with him. He needs strategies to organize assignments and break down questions into smaller segments. For example, he can multiply a four- or five-digit number by a one-digit number in his head without any problem but has no idea how to approach a question that has more than one step. Learning how to do each part separately and have the aide who works with him transcribe each step and read it back to him has been an adjustment for him.

Because he is not yet proficient in Braille, his reading and social studies texts are on tape.

In reading, the expectations have been lowered to being able to answer information questions about the selection being read. He listens to the reading selection and questions on the tape, records his answers, and the aide transcribes

them the following day at school. This is great for content but does not give a picture of his ability to structure sentences and spell words. Therefore, he has a Braille typewriter and a machine that translates the Braille to English at the press of a button. Usually when doing an assignment or an essay he tapes the compete work, Brailles a couple of questions or paragraphs of the essay, and translates this from Braille to English, using the machine. The teacher can thus mark grammar and construction as well as content. Content is evaluated using the tape or the notes transcribed by the aide.

In Social Studies, he does exactly the same material as the rest of the students except that he does it orally with the help of the aide. He listens to the material in each chapter on the tape, then the aide reads the question to him and writes exactly what he gives for the answer.

Math and Spelling are done from Braille books. In math he "reads" the question from the book, the aide writes down what he reads aloud, and then the question is worked with the aide transcribing each step, at times reading the question back to him to refresh his memory. At present the math exercises have been shortened (e.g., if there are 15 parts, he will do maybe 7 or 8 of them). Also, some of the math concepts are above his level so these are omitted and extra practice substituted. The major math project for the grade seven class this year was based on graphs which, of course, he cannot see. The amount of work needed to make these into tactile graphs was not practical. However, he does need to know about percentages and banking interests in order to manage his own affairs. These are part of the grade seven math program, so a major project on percent and interest was devised. The resource teacher develops the project in consultation with the math teacher. As a resource teacher I try to do most of the extra work involved in preparing and evaluating projects which are different from the class assignments. Some teachers prefer to do this themselves and that is fine as well.

In Technical Studies he was able to make a paper clip from a piece of wire without assistance and made a rocket with the help of a friend. It was more difficult to adapt the drafting part of the course, but he did a lot of work with handling forms to get a feel for the size and shape of different objects. The diagrams that were on graph paper were enlarged so he could use his limited vision to attempt to duplicate the assignments. Whereas the other students had several designs on each sheet, he had only one. Evaluation was based on participation and attempts at assignments.

In the Home Economics portion of the Technical Studies course, the theory lessons were put on tape and Braille labels were put on utensils for measuring. He works with a partner or the aide.

In Computer Ed, the aide reads the assignment to him, he types the information into the computer, and the aide reads what shows on the monitor. He has already

learned the typewriter keyboard so he has a jump on the other students as that is what they have been practising.

Evaluation of programs and assignments is always done in relation to the goals developed in the I.E.P. Home reports — the same home report forms are used for the special needs students as for the others — must indicate that the student is on an individual program.

The most important element in developing, adapting and evaluating programs and assignments is dialogue and co-operation among those working with the student.

Dawn Linton

CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM: MY FIRST YEAR

With the implementation of integration and being a firm believer that all children belong in the classroom, I wanted to get all the information and ideas that would help me do my best for all my Grade 2 students. So, in the summer of '88 I attended a week-long workshop given by Julie Stone and Charlotte Campbell at U.N.B. This workshop was for the teacher in the integrated classroom. We learned how, through multi-level teaching and co-operative learning, we could include each and every child in the learning process. Armed with what I learned there, my notes and all the hand-outs, I was determined to give co-operative learning a good try.

Co-operative learning is actually a sharing of ideas, knowledge and work in completing a task, whether it be written or oral, Language Arts, Math, Science or anything you may be teaching.

I had 21 students, including J, a special needs student. It was J's fourth year in school and my objective was to teach J the letters of the alphabet while including him in as much of the regular Grade 2 program as was possible. J was only removed from the classroom during testing and then, not always.

Having scrounged 7 tables and allowed myself time to get to know my students, it was at least four weeks into the year before I set up my groups, which were highly structured in the beginning with a high, average and low level student in each group. I actually had to teach the children how to communicate and work co-operatively. We started with very simple tasks such as spelling, filling in the blanks or completing a word list. To prepare students for co-operative learning in the beginning and then, as the year progressed, with a task unfamiliar to them I participated as a student in a "co-operative group." The children loved it! Essentially through this demonstration, I would be showing the average and high level students how to incorporate the low or special needs student in the group. In planning and preparing a group assignment or project, I always considered a capacity for the special needs student, whether it was printing, naming or pointing to the first letter in a spelling word or learning numbers by recording numbers given by other students. Each person in the group had a meaningful task and felt part of the group and equal to everyone. It was important that these tasks be assigned or demonstrated ahead of time.

From a variety of sources we developed a set of rules that were put on a chart and reviewed periodically. These rules included how to move to and from groups,

how to talk, etc. I discovered that using signs for movement (STOP - GO) and signals for getting attention (a timer, turning off the lights, etc.) was more effective than verbal instructions. I encouraged a positive emphasis. Instead of laughing at wrong answers or criticizing, we learned and used words of encouragement and praise. I walked around observing and listening as the children worked in their groups and would report back to the whole class on positive approaches. Through discussion, without naming individuals, I would correct anything negative that was observed. Later in the year I allowed students to do this observation.

It became evident very early that the students wanted to be in "co-operative time" all the time. The times I assigned individual work, as in Math or Workbooks, the question, "Can we work in our groups?" would pop up. It was at these times that I found some of my higher level students reluctant. This was not overtly shown but rather was an emotion or feeling expressed by the student that it was hard to be slowed down and that he or she wanted the opportunity to work independently and quickly. In one such instance, M came and asked if she had to go in her group. She wanted to complete the task independently at her desk. I knew she would do it quickly and wondered what she would want to do next, but she simply passed the work in and went over to join her group and helped them complete the task. This showed me that the many needs of the students must be considered and that being flexible enough to allow them to work in other ways when they needed to (e.g., alone, with another group, or with a specific friend) actually enhanced their acceptance of their co-operative learning group when they voluntarily returned to it. I did maintain the structured groups, which I changed three times during the year, but discovered that learning was actually taking place in all shared working experiences.

Working with another teacher who is also implementing co-operative learning provided tremendous support throughout the year. We shared all assignments, projects and group activities. We set up short- and long-term objectives and took turns making up tests. We would report back to each other good or poor results with a group task, suggesting either to repeat a good approach or try another approach for better results. Being flexible in our own timetables allowed this to work very well.

Students love working together. So much time in a traditional classroom is wasted in preventing students from talking and helping each other. Having experienced co-operative learning, I am firmly convinced that this is the natural way for children to work. It is very difficult for them not to talk and share in the learning process. I know they are capable of working independently because of test results and their level of accomplishment. Students were never marked or graded as a group. Co-operative assignments were learning tools and evaluation was independent through testing. A special needs student on an I.E.P. would be provided with a separate test. I relied strongly on my resource room teacher for guidance.

Overall, co-operative learning freed the teacher to do so much more with individual students. Very often one, two, or more students could be withdrawn from a group and could be provided individual or small group attention, whether it was to assist a special needs student, interest an average student, provide some enrichment or do some remedial teaching.

The experience of co-operative learning removed the boredom that often results when students "fill time" with extra seat work. Borderline students flourished as there was no fear or anxiety in getting an assignment completed. They developed a sense of self confidence and this was reflected in better test results. Incidentally, J, within four months, mastered not only the lower and upper case letters but the sounds as well, and all through co-operative work in the spelling program.

I received only positive comments from parents: "J is learning so much and he is so happy." "This is so good for R, he's developing a sense of tolerance." "This is such a community-like atmosphere."

Our enrichment was actually social enrichment and because the work was done so quickly we were able to move on to the next project much sooner than normal. Overall, the whole scope of learning was broadened through co-operative learning.

Dawn Savoie

INTEGRATION EXPERIENCES

Integration brings change, doubt, work and rewards. My experience with integration really began one stormy day near the end of August 1988. The waves were crashing on the rocks and thoughts of the new school year were crashing in on my conscious mind. This was to be a very difficult year for me, I was to have a special needs child. Questions upon questions were swirling around in my mind. What would she be like? Could I meet the challenge? What about the rest of my class? How could I manage to help everyone? These were but a few questions thundering around in my head that August day. There were no answers, yet.

September came and all my children arrived. Events went very smoothly. I felt I was meeting the needs of all my children. I heaved a sigh of relief, all was going well. However, around the end of October, I became vaguely dissatisfied with the learning of my special needs child. She was in my class, but was she truly a part of my class? She was, I determined, working within the structure of my class. Finally it became clear that what she was doing was not correlated to what the rest of the class was doing. If we were doing Math, she might be doing Reading. Although this created a peaceful atmosphere, it just didn't feel right. Doubts about what was happening began again.

"Now what do I do?" I worked over the next few weeks on different strategies to try. Nothing I tried satisfied me. Finally I modified all her subjects to fit in with the rest of the class; whatever we did, she did. I had not been doing this because my special needs child had little or no speech. When we all began doing the same subjects, she began to respond to the other children, making more attempts to communicate verbally with them.

I still wasn't satisfied. Things were going well, but my special needs child was still not interacting enough with the other children. Also, some of my other students were beginning to show very serious problems. They needed more of my time. It was a very trying time. What could be done to help these children? My aide was tied up with my special needs child whenever I wasn't. Both of us were very busy in the classroom and still there didn't seem to be enough time to reach everyone who needed our help.

Then one day in Woodstock I was introduced to co-operative learning. The workshop was exciting. I felt that I had a partial solution to my problems in the classroom. This strategy made sense.

There are a lot of things one needs to know about co-operative learning, but basically it is students helping students strive toward an academic goal. Not only academic skills, but also social skills, are taught and evaluated.

It took a while to set up the co-operative lessons, but when they began they were exciting. The children were working together in groups, responsible for their own learning as well as for others' learning. It was amazing to see children on their knees in their chairs, working through problems or discussing different topics. Now it was really hard to pick out my special needs child. She was part of the class, working along with the other children, sometimes with an aide, sometimes with me but mostly with the children. She was well on her way to becoming independent as well as interdependent.

Integration into the classroom is not an easy process, in fact it is a long, hard, ongoing process, but it has many rewards. Hearing a child speak when before there was hardly any speech is truly amazing. Mistakes were made, but along with errors came learnings. Using different strategies, trial and error are the essentials to integration in my opinion. Also, I couldn't have survived without the support and understanding of my principal, a fantastic resource teacher, my aide, fellow teachers and terrific parents.

As I look back to that day in August I realize that some questions now have partial answers, however, more questions have surfaced. Integration is a challenge, but isn't that what teaching is all about, meeting the challenge of the needs of every child within our care? Last year was a frustrating year, a rewarding year, a growing year; most of all it was exciting, alive with new possibilities.

Judy MacManus

INTEGRATION AT
UPPER MIRAMICHI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Academic Adaptations

— Language Arts stories are put on tape.
— Novels are taped.
— Students read to special needs students.
— Stories are shortened and written at the child's reading level. This is the child's oral reading level.
— Vocabulary words to be looked up as meanings are highlighted in the glossary.
— Quantity of questions is reduced. Skilpak packages are modified or exchanged for other work the child needs.
— Notes are reduced.
— Students often told exactly what to study for tests.
— Tests are read to the student and answers are recorded by the teacher.
— Student may read test orally and record the answers.
— Tests are modified to include only the work student is responsible for.
— Fewer spelling words are assigned.
— Marking system changed.
— Textbooks taped and questions written on material.

Strategies for Inclusion

— Projects where each student works at his own level.
— Students included in class trips, music, festivals, graduations, social activities, etc.
— School rules apply to *all* students.
— A "buddy" within the classroom.
— Teacher aide works with many students — not just special needs students.

Success Story

One of our special needs students and his friend who also has learning problems, entered our science fair at the school level. Here they were selected to participate at the district level. These boys placed second at the grade four level with their project on "Barometers". They were able to answer all questions they were asked, showing a good understanding of barometers.

The credit for encouraging the students to enter, for helping select a project, and teaching about barometers goes to our teacher aide, Lillian Wood.

Mrs. Wood worked noon hours, without pay, to help them prepare for the fair. The boys took the necessary measurements each day and Mrs. Wood taught the "why's" and "how's."

Without the support of a teacher aide, many special needs students in regular classrooms would not get the extra encouragement and assistance needed to participate in activities such as science fairs and might therefore miss many valuable learning experiences.

Pauline F. C. Merrill, Resource and Methods Teacher
Barbara Gilks, Principal

CHILD-CENTRED TEACHING

Over the past four years of teaching at the primary level my classroom environment and teaching practices have undergone many changes in order to meet the ever-challenging and diverse needs of my students, as well as to support my own philosophy of teaching. Through my university training, I developed an educational philosophy sometimes referred to as a child-centred philosophy. Although I felt philosophically prepared to teach in this way, it took time for me to put theory into practice. I had to learn what methods were available to help me develop a more realistic type of program that would still meet curriculum expectations. I especially wanted a language program that would be flexible enough to accommodate all of my students, even those on I.E.P.'s — a program that encouraged children to develop at their own rate rather than one that frustrated some and bored others.

Earlier in my career I felt obligated to practise a more traditional style of teaching than I do now. My program was controlled by textbooks, basals, workbooks and tests. I made the decisions about what the students would read even though Robyn, who was capable of reading at a higher level, wanted desperately to enjoy the next chapter of her chosen book, *Charlotte's Web,* and despite the fact that Melissa wanted to *tell* her classmates a story from a book of photographs (taken while on a trip to Florida last week) because she was not yet ready to handle the selection I had chosen for the whole class. I also made decisions about what they would write and how they would do it (in pencil, of course!) even though David wanted to write (in ink of all things!) during class time about the ten-dollar pledge he had made last night to the I.W.K. Children's Hospital because, "I saw this sick little baby in a clear bed and I wanted to help her."

Countless classroom observations such as those I have described, as well as my university training, teacher in-services given by such notable educators as Frank Smith, Alice Yardley and others, and many hours spent reading current research on literacy and learning made me still more dissatisfied with following recipe-style teaching practices. They were not meeting the individual needs of my students. Therefore, I felt the need to rethink my program in order to find unity with the child-centred philosophy I have so long supported and the approaches I would feel more comfortable using in my classroom.

I began the transition to new teaching practices slowly. Over a two-year period I experimented with three instructional methods: (1) Learning Centres, (2) Writing Process and (3) Individualized Reading.

I implemented Learning Centres in my program after attending a workshop in the fall of '86. The session helped to show me how to incorporate grade level objectives into centre activities and how to modify activities for more advanced learners as well as the less mature students. I currently have eight Learning Centres set up in my classroom and in the hall: Language, Math, Science, Computer, Listening, Art, Blocks and Drama. The centres are often organized around thematic units. Since implementing the centres I have found that my students are learning concepts more easily through manipulating concrete objects, and that they interact more co-operatively with their peers. Working in centres allows them the freedom to make choices, helps them learn to care for materials and equipment and encourages them to discover and learn things at their own rate, thus leading them to a feeling of self-confidence. Finally, the centres enable the children to use their spare time more productively than in the past.

Following the Writing Process Conference in Newcastle in the fall of '88, I now have more writing going on in my classroom. My students write every day on self-selected topics. Folders are kept for each child's writing. Individual as well as group conferences take place. Invented spelling is encouraged, publishing is done for selected pieces chosen by the author and time is allocated for children to share their writing. Class mailboxes further encourage students to write and communicate with one another.

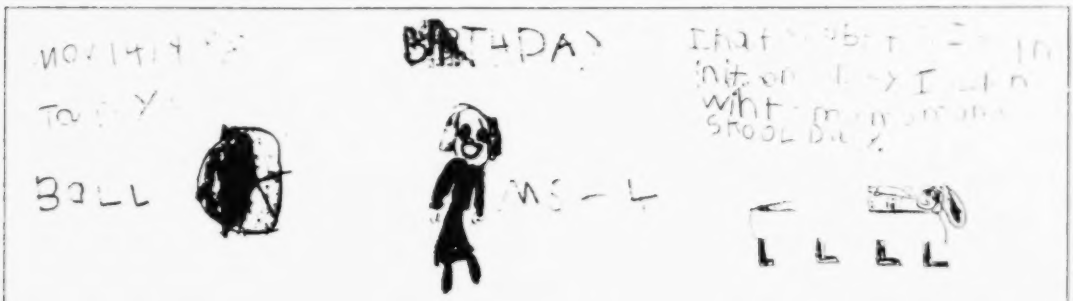
After just a few months of using the Writing Process I was so pleased (as were the parents) with the results that I was inspired to go the next step further: to experiment with the same philosophical perspective in the area of reading. As a result, I gradually pushed the basals and workbooks aside (keeping only a very few exercises that might be relevant and interesting to the students) and led my class into a more personalized and independent reading program, a program that encourages students to select their own books for reading time and allows time for reading these real books every day. The children are free to read independently or with a friend, at a table, on the floor or wherever they feel comfortable. Sharing books through class discussions and dramatizations came as a natural extension of our quiet reading time. Through using this practice to teach reading, I have found that my students have become more avid and eager readers. Not only are they reading about things that are of interest to them, they are, at the same time, learning the fundamentals of reading in the same way they learn the fundamentals of writing — through meaningful reading and writing experiences.

My role as a teacher now is to facilitate learning, as opposed to controlling it. Therefore, during Learning Centres, Reading and Writing times I become a "kid watcher." I circulate, observe and record the behaviour of my students as they work. I interact when necessary by clarifying directions, asking questions and taking advantage of teachable moments to lead my students to their fullest learning potential. I have found that a great deal of my time is spent on teaching

individuals and small groups. I spend less time on whole class instruction and I am much more selective about when I use it. The flexibility of these approaches has also allowed our Resource and Methods teacher to teach special needs students within the classroom.

My evaluation methods have become more personal as well as more manageable and reliable. I am a strong believer in keeping good records by collecting lots of information on each child. Over the school year, I collect useful examples of the children's work in all subject areas, examples that clearly show *individual progress.*

Three samples of Tanya's writing from the day we began the Writing Process. Writing daily for approximately twenty minutes. You can see her emerging writing skills over this period of time.



November 14. *Ball.*
Her first attempt was to copy a word from a picture dictionary and to illustrate it. She also did a lovely job printing her full name and the date.

December 8. *My sister is 4.*
After writing daily for a couple of weeks, Tanya becomes a little braver. She attempts her own sentence using invented spelling. She puts down consonants she hears at the beginning of each syllable. Copies BIRTHDAY from our class birthday chart.

February 23. *I have a new bed and I slept in it. One day I slept in with my mom on a school day.*
Continued development. Tanya is beginning to spell some words in the conventional manner. Continues, however, to take risks as a writer and uses invented spelling as well. Here she has written two sentences that are legible.

Included with the sample of each child's work is a record of performance on a few informal and formal tests. I also keep an anecdotal record book on top of my desk. It is a three-ring binder with looseleaf pages sectioned off for each student. I record such things as a student's interaction with another child, learning milestones, work habits, concerns, and interpretations. This record book has helped me to learn even more about my students by having other teachers record in it as well. These anecdotal notes have proven to be an invaluable source to refer to during report card write-ups and Parent/Teacher Interviews.

Allen

March 15 Parent/Teacher Interview. Good. I met Allen's new baby brother Michael and his other brother, Greg.

March 20 Read his published book re Baby Brother.

March 30 Shared his writing re Easter presents he received.

Understands about upper and lower case letters, where and when to use them. We worked on this during conferencing.

April 7 Using a calculator during his spare time, he practised skip counting by 10's to 100 and then said he would try by 5's to 100. He discovered that it takes nine times using the = sign to get to 100. I asked him — counting just the number of 10's — how many tens are in 100? At first he replied "nine." I then pointed out the very first 10 he punched in and he asked, "Are you supposed to count that one too?" I said "yes" and his reply was, "Well, that means it takes ten tens to make 100!" Later, during centre time, he verified his discoveries by using Unifix blocks and made trains of 10's and 5's.

April 26 Continues to use his spare time making more discoveries on calculator. He said, "I know how many ones there are in 100. There are 100." He also said, "I discovered that there are two 100's in 200."

Keeping parents informed about and involved in their child's education is another priority of mine. I send home monthly reports on each student's progress and monthly newsletters to keep parents informed about the happenings in our class. Parents are encouraged to visit our class and to share anything they may feel would be of interest to the children. For example, we had a parent this year who brought in some of her own books that she had written and illustrated to read to the children.

I can honestly say that I enjoy teaching now more than ever. I am much more confident about the teaching practices I am using to meet the individual needs of my students. I feel that I know my students much more personally, that they are growing academically and socially at their own individual rates and are doing so within an inviting and risk-taking environment. Some of my students have surpassed the expected grade level objectives for grade one, others, who are not yet ready to meet those same objectives, still have met with success at their own levels. Thanks to the encouragement and support I have received this year from my district supervisor, school principal and staff, I am looking forward to yet another fulfilling and productive school year.

Joanne E. Hughson

STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION: WHAT WORKS

Many thoughts run through my mind about the things that have or haven't worked for me, as a Methods and Resource teacher, in the integration of students. I very strongly feel that all children should be considered as equals, and that they have various likenesses and differences that require us as educators to develop whatever it takes in order to prepare them for a "good life."

DO:

Give the teachers who will be working with the student sufficient information in order that they don't run into any major surprises (medical, behaviour, etc.).

Pick teachers who like all kids and still enjoy their work.

Make sure that you are not the only teacher responsible for the students. For example, I hate hearing, "These are Larry's students."

Keep your principal well aware of your program. They need to be, in order to represent the student.

Take lots of chances; that way you'll have a good idea of what you need to work on.

Make sure that the student has responsibility for projects and jobs, just like the rest of the class.

All students are considered equal and should be required to take responsibility for any undesirable behaviour or action. As you know, this isn't always possible with some students, but should be used when appropriate. No special treatment.

Place students in classes that are of interest to them. Use good judgement about why they are in the class. Single out a few students who show interest in the kids and encourage their interaction. High profile students are great, and so are low profile.

You must make sure that all the students take part in anything that will teach them, e.g., school dances, sports events, student council elections, special events, and any other opportunities.

Over the years the thing that has most worked for me has been common sense, and equality. I hate the word *integration* because it makes me feel that I have to

fight towards a cause. There's no question about where kids should be, they should be where all the other kids are and doing as much as they can. It's not integration any more, it's simply education!

DON'T:

Never put a student in a class with a teacher who feels uncomfortable or doesn't feel that the student should be there. There are always going to be teachers like this, and we have to live with it.

Don't expect everyone to be as optimistic as you are about the students.

Don't put students in situations where they would stand out or be singled out.

Don't accept anything but #1 treatment of the student by staff and student body.

Don't forget that we as educators are responsible to all students, to educate, encourage and direct.

My whole feeling about what has worked is: make it simple, keep it updated, and use a practical, common sense approach.

Larry Rhindress

TEACHING ALL THE CHILDREN

To know you are loved and you are special is the most important ingredient needed to make every child feel equal. You, the teacher must look for something in every child the day school begins. The negatives will jump up and hit you, but in every individual there is something unique and precious. It is the teacher's responsibility to find it.

The atmosphere of acceptance and sharing in the classroom is encouraged through stories, everyday experiences and those wonderful stormy days when we have indoor recess and lunch hour. I observe the children playing in groups of three or four. We have several baskets of toys, puzzles, etc., which I have collected over the years; these are called our sharing baskets. The new math manipulatives are also a fantastic learning tool through play. If a sharing problem comes up, I have a little chat with the children and they go merrily on their way.

Playtime is a learning experience for the teacher as well as the child. You can spot the loner. Get him involved, he may be shy. You as the teacher can be his buddy and build up his confidence. Gradually he will branch out and develop friendly, sociable behaviour.

In our Social Studies Program, Duso the Dolphin and his underwater problem solvers are excellent guides for teaching us about sharing and getting along with others. We enjoyed the stories, tapes and songs. Highly recommended. Take time every day to play, sing and have fun.

Our classroom motto is: "Do your best work, little ones, angels can do no more." This has been a wonderful guide. From this we understand we are all different. The children know my weakness is in drawing; since I give them encouragement and praise in their weak areas, they do the same for me.

Some things we do differently for different children, depending on the child's needs.

I would like to cite a case of a physically handicapped, mentally alert little boy who had cancer and had also suffered a stroke which impaired his walking and his speech. From Charlie's situation the children learned patience and the buddy system where we help one another when needed. And he taught us love. His whole world was Love. The children accepted the fact that Charlie would curl up in his ready-made bed (a covered mat and pillow) whenever he was tired. I kept him with us because he would have felt isolated in the health room. He passed

away but he left the most beautiful feeling of love for everyone who knew him. I had prepared the children for his loss through books dealing with death.

An emotionally disturbed child was integrated into the regular grade one, after he had been asked to leave kindergarten for his disruptive behaviour. We were well warned: Wendall spells danger.

The first day, here arrives this handsome, wholesome boy with curiosity just bubbling from him. I seated him where I could have eye contact, a pat, a smile, a word about behaviour, a word of encouragement. We first felt he had shown signs of autism (very mild). He was a loner for a long time. His behaviour would try the patience of a saint at the beginning of the year, but we mastered it. We played the tape and read the book on self control. We all learned from this. At any new experience he would become so frustrated and would scream and cry.

He needed a great deal of guidance in schoolyard play. We found the noon hour recess was too long for him. Instead, he would go out for 15 minutes and come in for 15 minutes where there was always something exciting to do. I read everything I could find about emotionally disturbed children and some of the articles helped me to deal with Wendall. He was awkward with crayons and paper and, because he seemed prone to daydreaming or going into his own world, the task at hand was not always completed. He had a memory bank like a computer.

All children were involved in helping Wendall to be accepted socially. At the beginning of the year when he could not pack his school bag or get dressed, someone was there to help him. He was very proud when he could handle these exercises alone. I found parent co-operation great.

To make the classroom climate warm and supportive, it is your classroom manner, your relationships with your students, your lesson presentation and your knowledge and interest in the subject that count. Allow the students to have fun but be learning at the same time. I try to keep all students involved in the lesson regardless of their academic ability and then work in our groups at the level where they can reach success.

Some givens that are the same for everyone: we love one another, we care, we share, we help.

Mary T. O'Keefe
Retired Grade One Teacher

MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

After teaching for twenty years, I was suddenly, and without preparation, faced with what I thought would be a new situation. I was to include in my grade five class two "special" children. Special in that they had spent considerable time in self-contained special education classes in another school.

My class consisted of thirty-one pupils with a wide range of abilities and interests. Tammy, Jill, Amber and Kara were great workers, very bright and eager to learn. Andrea, Stacey and Roxanne were hard working but struggling. Calvin and Cory were striving against monstrous odds to "catch up to the rest of the class." Andrew was experiencing a family crisis, angry at the world. Enrique was struggling with the English language and a new environment. Nathan was trying to cope with an attention deficit disorder. Of course there were many other "normal" children as well, each with his or her own concerns.

In addition to this selection, there was Charlotte, tired and unkempt, who enjoyed colouring, music, and puzzles, but hated math. And there was Joni, who loved math, but hated music, and was trying to learn to print her address this year. Charlotte and Joni, my "special" pupils, had initially caused me the greatest apprehension since they were what made this class "different," a new situation to me.

As with most elementary classes, my grade five class had a wide range of abilities. There were also a number of children with emotional, social and academic problems. Andrew for example, had a history of disruptive behaviour; his family crisis added to his level of frustration.

In order to provide Andrew with the extra attention he craved and also to reduce commotion in the class as a whole, I decided to place his desk next to mine at the back of the classroom. In this way, when I finished teaching a lesson at the front of the room I would make frequent stops at my own desk, giving Andrew frequent opportunities to ask for help. It also gave me the chance to check his progress unobtrusively and suggest ways to help him proceed. This situation gave Andrew fewer chances to misbehave because I was close by and, because our desks were at the back of the room instead of at the front, Andrew was less disruptive to the class when he did act out. This is one strategy that has worked for me with many of my pupils.

Surprisingly, however, Charlotte and Joni, although certainly unable to achieve at a grade 5 level (or even at a grade 1 level) fitted in nicely. At times I felt as though I was not doing enough for them, but I soon came to realize that they

were indeed learning, with the help of the Methods and Resource teacher. For example, Joni learned her numbers to 20 and how to get her sneakers on and off by herself. Charlotte built her vocabulary considerably and, although it may seem insignificant, she learned to call me *Mrs. Springer* instead of just *Springer.*

Both girls were eager to participate in the work the class was doing and I tried to facilitate this as often as possible. During math activities when the children were using manipulatives such as red plastic miras or interlocking cubes, Joni and Charlotte worked within a small group and enjoyed these activities. In Social Studies they distributed textbooks, making sure they each had one to "read" with the class. Pairing each child with another pupil was helpful during phys. ed. classes. This helped them participate more fully.

However, there were certainly exercises that had to be individualized for Joni and Charlotte. Charlotte is a hard, diligent worker and she often completed a task before I was ready to check it or give her the next activity. To enable me to have time to work with the other boys and girls, I kept jigsaw puzzles available for Charlotte to work on. She especially enjoyed a rather difficult puzzle of the map of Canada and she got very excited when she recognized her name in the capital of Prince Edward Island.

But perhaps the greatest learning was done by my regular children. They became Charlotte's and Joni's advocates and protectors. I remember Stacey coming to me to explain how when Charlotte was talking on the way to French class, Stacey would silently put her finger to her lips to indicate that Charlotte was to be quiet. It worked. Throughout the year such incidents popped up frequently. I discovered the natural mother in Belinda, forever making sure that my girls were walking, not running, in the corridors and taking them to the washroom. Sarah enjoyed helping them with their math. Shannon volunteered to assist in signing out library books. In this way my "special" children, with the help and kindness of my regular pupils, made my class a "special" class indeed. All in all, I think that I had a successful year and I look forward to including Joni and Charlotte among my pupils in the school year to come.

I certainly do not wish to mislead anyone. We had our fair share of problems. However, most of the problems I encountered stemmed as much from children's home life as from their ability level, a situation common in many classrooms.

Pauline Springer

REALISTIC INTEGRATION

The intention of this article is not to discuss whether we should integrate, but how to carry out the task of integration realistically. The reality in New Brunswick is that all students have the right by law to attend public school. I feel that the law makers have not considered the changes needed in the schools and in teachers to deal with handicapped students. As a result of this oversight, teachers like myself have learned to integrate students by experience.

On the following pages I will try to show how attitudes, teamwork and curriculum adaptations play a role in realistic integration.

Four years ago I entered an auxiliary class with the intention of sharing some of the wonders of science. The students were of varying ages, sex and mental abilities. During the class I demonstrated the use of lasers and tuning forks. The children were amazed with the demonstrations and very much interested in my presence. I was nervous and had difficulty communicating with the students. Upon leaving the class I felt that most of the students could not benefit from being in my science class.

In retrospect, I would say that not being able to communicate with special needs students has been my greatest barrier to integration. Once you discover how to communicate with handicapped students, you can teach them and they can learn. To understand special needs students you must get to know each student as an individual learner. Each child will then appear as unique, with strengths and weaknesses. I have no magic answer to the problem of communication. It is simply a process of trial and error.

People who are more familiar with the student in question are good resource persons. Parents and other teachers have given me valuable insights as to the habits, hobbies and modes of communication of my students. Other children have been able to help me realize the wants and needs of the handicapped children.

A child sitting at the back of a class, to whom the teacher never speaks, will never become part of the learning process.

Another attitude that is widely held among educators is that integrated students cannot succeed in academically demanding classes. In our school, a girl named Becky was placed in English 103 because it was assumed that she might find English 102 too abstract. During the year, the 102 English teacher used some Social Studies classes to practise Shakespeare. Becky was a student in the Social

Studies class and learned one of the Shakespeare parts simply by observing. You will never know the full potential of any student unless they are exposed to a variety of subjects.

The most important key to successful integration in my classes is the teamwork that exists between myself and the Resource Teacher. Due to the small size of our school, the Resource Teacher and I have daily discussions. I find her ideas and suggestions invaluable. We meet on a weekly basis to set objectives and review student progress.

The idea of teamwork must be extended to include principals, parents and district administrators. Class size and workloads should be adjusted for teachers who have special needs students in their classes. Even with four years of integration experience, I found my last assignment of six different subjects, 125 students and three Individual Education Programs a demanding task. Parents or administrators who place unrealistic demands on inexperienced teachers are asking for failure. Only through teamwork can the perfect balance be struck, that will produce the best classroom environment for all children.

The last and most necessary ingredient to realistic integration is curriculum adaptation. Curriculum adaptation does not mean reducing the quality of education, instead, it means providing the best possible on-topic instruction to all students. Students with special needs may require modified materials and instructions which are parallel to the regular curriculum. Parallel curriculum means doing the same kind of work but at a level suitable to the needs and abilities of the integrated student.

Curriculum adaptation can only be accomplished if the classroom teacher works with the Resource Teacher, knows his students and sets realistic objectives. Two years ago a boy named Rob was in my Chemistry 112 class. Rob was a junior fireman in our community. One topic covered in Chemistry was chemical reactions. After discussions with the Resource Teacher, it was decided that reactions dealing with burning would be included in Rob's parallel materials. Rob would work on equations dealing with burning while other students worked on balancing equations. Separate materials were prepared for Rob which included fill-in-the-blank and matching questions relating to chemical equations.

In Chemistry Rob also had an opportunity to work with a group in the lab. Rob's contribution to the group included collecting equipment, making measurements and making some observations. Rob's partner would read instructions and make conclusions.

The best way I have found to adapt curriculum is to provide group activities. The group activities that work best have the following characteristics:

1. hands-on work,
2. choice of activity,
3. tasks with varying levels of difficulty,
4. variety.

In grade eight Social Studies I developed a group activity that required each group to draw, write letters, make an audio tape and colour maps. A boy named Corey who excelled in drawing could contribute a great deal to his group. Corey has poor language skills and could have contributed very little to a totally written project.

Knowing your students' strengths allows you to develop activities that will include them in the class.

Student evaluation must be part of any successful curriculum adaptation. Evaluation that makes use of oral tests, short answers, labelling, matching and simple prediction is effective with special needs students. Testing must closely follow the objectives set for the students.

Challenging questions should not be ignored. On one grade nine exam, a boy named Richard wrote a three-page essay on the topic, "What I learned in Science this year." The essay included ideas about how he made measurements using balances, graduated cylinders and beakers. He also told about working with levers and mixing chemicals that changed colours.

Adapting curriculum requires imagination, knowledge of your topic, knowledge of your student, and teamwork.

In conclusion, I feel integration can be made realistic if teachers, administrators and parents are willing to work together to set realistic goals.

The sky is the limit, but this limit is only attainable with additional resources, new approaches and the willingness of all concerned to be realistic.

David Blair

A PASSION FOR LEARNING

To have a thirst for knowledge — a passion for learning; to love books, either as a source of knowledge or for personal comfort and enjoyment; and to believe in yourself — to know that you have an opinion and that opinion counts — to have enough confidence to agree or to disagree with another, but to do so tactfully — and to recognize mistakes as an opportunity to learn are not only the goals I want all the children I teach to want for themselves, but are also the beliefs that are the foundation for all that I teach. The academic portion comes easily when the children are secure and respectful of one another. These beliefs do not change nor are they modified for a special needs child in my classroom.

It takes a great deal of time, effort, and experience to be able to accept *who* each child is and *where* s/he is "at", and then to offer that child just enough (not too much — not too little) of a mismatch to tease him/her into wanting *more* — to make that challenge inviting — exciting. I do nothing different for my special needs children. What entices the special needs child to the next step may not involve the same approach or the same materials, or the same effort as is required for the child sitting next to him. But then again, if the teacher is true to herself and to the children the same contrast will be evident between any two other children in the classroom.

It has been my experience that books have a great deal to offer to all children. Considerable exposure to all sorts of books and their authors' and illustrators' styles allows children the opportunity to make sound personal choices. At an early age, children can be taught to appreciate certain books for their type of verse, humour, imagination, theme, colour, size and appropriateness of illustrations and so on. Once a child is aware of the kinds of books that give him pleasure, recognizes why a particular book is fulfilling for him and can express his reasons clearly to others, then that child is more secure and self confident. Furthermore, when that child can listen while another child expresses the same enthusiasm over a completely different type of book, then acceptance of self and of others is enhanced.

A special needs child also prefers some books over others. She may not be able to express herself verbally, but her preferences are obvious through her look of contentment, a sparkle in her eyes, or, if possible, by physically choosing some books over and over. If a child is incapable of expressing his thoughts verbally about his likes/dislikes of a book, the other children are, at this point, only too quick to notice, to recognize, and to want to relate why they think that child enjoys a particular book. Often, because they have become so accepting of

themselves and of others — lacking adult inhibitions — they are completely "tuned in" (more so than I am) to the desires of the special needs child.

Books open many doors. They help to bring children closer together. As the children become more and more comfortable discussing their feelings through books, we move on gradually to open "on-the-spot" discussions about anything and everything that may affect one or all of us throughout the day.

I make a mistake. We stop. I try to make light of the situation. I decide aloud what I learned from that mistake. I ask the children what they could learn from my mistake.

A child makes a mistake. We stop and talk about what happened — trying all the while to help that child become comfortable with his making that mistake. What did he learn? What could we learn from his mistake?

We stop often during the day, pointing out an individual's strengths and, yes, weaknesses. Gradually, the children learn to recognize their own strengths and accept and decide if something can be done about strengthening their weaknesses.

We spend a great deal of time using various sources to find out information so the children will understand that it's all right not to "know" everything or to be wrong sometimes, and so they will realize that even authorities differ in opinions. We also spend a great deal of time just discussing why something happened. Each child is encouraged to give his/her opinion and the others are encouraged to agree or disagree, but to do so tactfully. If a child laughs inappropriately, the other children readily show their disapproval — but calmly.

This whole process is ongoing throughout the year and — according to many parents — often has far-reaching implications.

The special needs child is respected and accepted as each child in the classroom is respected and accepted. The special needs child is recognized as having strengths and weaknesses as well. We all talk about what he/she needs — just how much assistance is beneficial. The children gradually become acutely aware of their communication with their friend. They instinctively "tune in" to meet each situation, whether it be on the playground, in the gym, in the classroom, or on Saturday at the park, with more finesse and expertise than most adults. Some, of course, respond differently than others, but, thankfully, that individualism is what makes the world go 'round.

Children, when given the opportunity, will usually rise to the occasion. They are our best ambassadors — showing us that you must accept yourself before you can truly accept others.

Linda Hickey

48